

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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WHAT HE COST HER.

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AUTHOR OF "LOST SIR MASSINGERD," "AT HER MERCY,"
"HALVES," &c.

CHAPTER III. THE MARCH TO CHARLTON.

It is stated by the orthodox, that some belief in the existence of powers above us is necessary to every man; and therefore it is that we so often see the infidel so credulous as regards spirit-rapping, table-turning, and other idiotic phenomena; and the same may be said with at least equal truth of those who reject authority in mundane affairs. The workman who flies in the face of his employer is a bondsman to his trade's union, and the patriot who scorns the tyrant is submissive enough to his revolutionary committee.

Thus at the Royal Military Academy, in the old times, before the flood of good behaviour had swept over all such institutions, there was a spirit of anarchy which, while it resented any lawful supervision, or discipline, was subservient, even to slavery, to any edict promulgated by the Cadet Company itself, in the persons of its leaders. No orders of secret society were ever carried out more scrupulously than those which emanated from the committee of old cadets, which sat en permanence—like Robespierre's—and made decrees as inviolable (and sometimes as ridiculous) as those of the Medes and Persians. Thews and sinews were, of course, at the back of the committee—such a thrashing as Winchester with its poor ash-sticks has no idea of, would have awaited the disobedient; but, besides that, there was a real authority exercised by the "under-officers," which, no doubt, added to

its power. The boasted monitorial system, devised at our public schools to save the expense of a sufficiency of masters, was carried at Woolwich to extremity. The captain of a man-of-war, when at sea, was, in the days of which we speak, looked upon as an example of irresponsible power; but the relation of an "old cadet," or "a corporal" to his juniors at the Academy was infinitely more authoritative; and the Academy was always at sea. If the nature of this superior being was exceptionally good, no serious evils arose from the exercise of his power; but—we are speaking, it must be remembered, of an antediluvian epoch—all gentlemen-cadets were not exceptionally good. Judged by a modern standard, a good many of them would have been pronounced exceptionally bad. And in that case it was exceptionally bad for the "snookers." Many will doubtless say it was the absence of classical literature, which, as the Latin poet tells us, acts as an emollient, that made these young military students so ferocious; plan drawing and the mathematics being their only mental pabulum, may, perhaps, have had the same effect upon them as is attributed to a diet of human flesh; but, at all events, they were a rough lot, and "old Pipeclay," as Major-General Sir Hercules Plummet, their governor, was familiarly termed, found them what the Scotch call "kittle cattle" to manage. He was not very exacting in the matter of moral restraint. His young gentlemen broke a good deal of the decalogue with comparative impunity, and committed a number of peccadilloes besides, unknown to ordinary law-breakers and law-makers, without even provoking official remonstrance; but against one particular crime old Pipeclay

was fixed; he had "put his foot down" upon that article of the constitution, which prohibited any gentleman-cadet from attending Charlton Fair.

Charlton Fair is now gone the way of all wickedness; but in the times of which I write it flourished like a green bay-tree, in a locality somewhere to the south of the high-road that runs between Woolwich and Greenwich. Stern moralists were wont to find fault with the Greenwich Fair of that epoch, but the fair at Greenwich, as compared with that at Charlton, was

As moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine.

Water, in truth, had very little to do with it; but if you would have seen Charlton Fair aright, you should have visited it by the pale moonlight (as Sir Walter says of Melrose), to see it in perfection. Then, if you got away from it without a broken head, you were lucky. Everybody was more or less drunk; to say, as is now the mode, that they had "exceeded in liquor," would give a very faint picture of the condition of most of the revellers; and, if any of them were not actually engaged in combat, it was because they were too far gone in drink. We believe it was a "royal" fair, and at all events possessed a patent that required an Act of Parliament to amend it. It lasted for many days and nights, and was looked upon by the wandering tribes of gipsies and showmen, and also by the riverside population of the extreme East of London, less as a carnival than a saturnalia. The law itself seemed to grant them an indulgence for anything committed at Charlton Fair, and they looked upon any infringement of its licence with much greater horror than they would have regarded the abolition of Magna Charta.

The care exercised by the military authorities of the time over its youthful students could scarcely be called paternal, but they did veto attendance at this fair in very distinct and stringent terms, not upon the ground of morality, but of discipline. Gentlemen-cadets were wont to return from that scene of amusement so very unlike officers and gentlemen in embryo, or even in the most distant perspective; so often, too, without divers of their accoutrements, and so unable to go through that test of sobriety, their "facings," that the place was taboo. And here let us state (lest it should be imagined, because we are describing a somewhat anarchical state of things, that

we in any way sympathise with the same) that the authorities did their duty—sometimes—manfully enough. When they had made up their minds to stop any particular breach of discipline, they did stop it. The general administration of the Academy was mild to laxness; but where it did draw a hard-and-fast line, it was like the stretched bowstring of an Eastern monarch—the gentleman-cadet that opposed himself to it was a gentleman-cadet no longer. The Cadet Company fully understood their position with regard to their rulers in this respect, and in a general way confined themselves to setting at defiance such enactments as were not thus indicated, as it were, by a red mark in their military regulations, and for more than five years they had abstained with exemplary obedience from attendance at Charlton Fair. But, unfortunately, on the present occasion, a circumstance had occurred which rendered further submission to the edict in question—so at least the committee of corporals and heads of rooms had decided—impossible. The immediate cause of revolution was (as often happens) contemptible enough. Two last-joined cadets—creatures themselves unworthy of attention except that they were cadets, and affiliated to the general body—in returning from the usual Saturday and Sunday "leave" in London, had taken it into their heads to pass a few hours of the Sabbath evening in the precincts of the fair. They were not, of course, in uniform, and in that circumstance lay Darall's only hope that the vengeance of the corps would not be invoked upon their account; but it was known by the Fair people (with whom the memory of the tenants of the Military Academy and their misdoings was tolerably fresh) that they were cadets, and as such they had been without doubt most grievously ill-treated. Whether they had provoked their bad reception, was a question that did not occur to the committee of corporals and heads of rooms. They were gentlemen-cadets of the Royal Military Academy, and their persons ought to have been held sacred, which had evidently not been the case. One of the young gentlemen had had his leg broken, and the other, the bridge of his nose. The leg and the bridge might be repaired, but the wounded honour of the Cadet Company could not be healed by the surgeon's art.

"War, with its thousand battles and shaking a thousand thrones," was the

decision that had been arrived at in solemn, but secret, conclave by the Cadet Committee. When afternoon parade should be over, on the day on which our story commences, it was enacted that in place of "breaking off," and giving themselves up to recreation, the company should keep their ranks and march down upon the offending myriads at the fair. The cadet army was numerically small, counting in all perhaps one hundred and sixty, but then they had military discipline, and, above all—though this was not specially mentioned—was not their cause a just one, and likely to be favoured of high Heaven? It had been suggested by some fantastic spirits that Messrs. Bright and Jefferson should be taken out of hospital, in their damaged condition, and carried in front of the host, as the bodies of those revolutionists who had been shot by the soldiery were wont to be borne aloft by their avenging brethren; but this sensational suggestion had been overruled by Bex, who was a great disciplinarian, and even a martinet in his way, and could find no precedent in the annals of war for such a proceeding.

Throughout that morning a certain hushed solemnity, by no means characteristic of the Cadet Company, pervaded that martial corps, but otherwise none could have guessed its dread intentions. Senior-under-officer Bex had somewhat of the air with which the Duke of Wellington is depicted, while conceiving those famous lines which will live in men's memories as long as most creations of our poets—the lines of Torres Vedras; with one hand in the breast of his coat, and the other upon his forehead, he paced the parade, revolving doubtless his plans of attack. It was only like Mr. Whympers's ill-luck—as he afterwards observed—that that conciliatory young gentleman should have misunderstood this attitude, and inquired, with much apparent concern, whether the great chieftain had a headache; "No, sir, but I will give you one," was the unexpected reply with which his proffered sympathy was met, and it is probable that that "inch of his life," which the tender mercies of the cruel proverbially leave to their victims, was only preserved to him because, in such a crisis, the cadet army could not afford to lose a recruit, even of the very smallest importance. The other old cadets maintained for the most part a careless demeanour, as befitted young warriors, to whom fire and steel—

or at least stones and bludgeons—were matters of no moment; though it is likely that under that indifferent air lurked some apprehensions, not, perhaps, of the coming strife, but of what their parents and guardians would be likely to say about it, when it should prove to have cost them their prospective commissions. Landon would have been in the highest spirits, having no fear of either event before his eyes, but for his solicitude upon his friend's account. Darall had "fallen in" at the morning's parade, and gone "into academy"—that is, to pursue his studies—like the rest; and now he had retired to his room, as Landon shrewdly suspected, to write a letter home, explaining that circumstances over which he had no control might be the ruin of him. There was still time for him to put himself on the sick-list, but the opportunity of doing so, without exciting suspicion, was gone by.

Cecil Landon would never have been a traitor to any cause; wild horses would not have torn the secret of the coming outbreak from him, to the prejudice of his companions; yet his zeal for the honour of the Academy was not so overpowering as to outweigh discretion. If he had been in Darall's place—as he frankly confessed to that gentleman—he would have seen Bex and Company—so he styled the honourable corps—in a warmer place than even they were likely to find Charlton Fair, before he would have sacrificed his future prospects to them.

But, if he could not be termed public-spirited, he had a thought for his friends as well as himself—as indeed may be gathered from the fact of his popularity. Men—especially young ones—make great mistakes in choosing their favourites, but they never select a mere egotist. Landon was gravely concerned upon his friend's account, being well aware of the hostages which, in his case, had been given to fortune, and the delight which his reckless nature would have otherwise felt in the approaching émeute was dashed by this solicitude.

When he saw Darall take his place with the rest in the dining-hall, he knew that his arguments had failed of their effects, and that his friend's lot was thrown into the common urn. In those ancient days it was the custom of the oldsters at dinner to behave like Jack Sprat and his wife in the nursery ballad: among them they "licked the platter clean," and then sent it down to the unfortunate "neuxes;" or,

at least, the heads of each mess cut off for themselves such meat as was tempting, and left the fag-end of the feast for the tails. But to-day, since it was necessary that the whole Cadet Company should be in good condition and full of vigour, there was a more equal distribution of beef and mutton; and at Darall's mess the "snookers" fared exceptionally well, for that gentleman eat next to nothing.

"Darall is off his feed; I think he is in a funk," whispered Whymper to Trotter. An ungrateful remark enough, since he was reaping the advantage of his senior's abstinence in a slice of mutton that was neither skin nor bone.

"Rubbish!" was the contemptuous rejoinder. Conversation at the cadet mess was abrupt in those days, but generally to the point. "If you can't think better than that, confine yourself to eating."

In an hour afterwards the bugle sounded for general parade. After the minute inspection of the gentlemen-cadets' stocks, and belts, and boots—which was the chief feature of this ceremony—was over, the usual course was for the officer in command to address the Cadet Company in the soul-stirring words, "Stand at ease." "Break." And then everybody went about his pleasure, until the next bugle sounded for study. On the present occasion the words of command were spoken, but without their ordinary effect. When the officer walked away the "company," instead of "breaking," closed up, and Senior-under-officer Bex took command of it.

"*Attenshon,*" was the counter-order he delivered; "Left turn," "Quick march;" and at that word the whole corps, in one long line of two files only—so that it resembled a caterpillar—wound out of the parade-ground, past the porter's lodge, and marched off across the common to Charlton Fair. The emotion of the officer on duty was considerable; but, perceiving the utter hopelessness of restraining one hundred and sixty gentlemen-cadets with his single arm, or even both of them, he turned disconsolately into the library, wrote down a formal complaint for the inspection of old Pipeclay, and washed his hands of his young friends for the afternoon.

"Left, right, left, right, left, right;" the corps had never marched better to church upon a Sunday than it did upon its mutinous errand; and Generalissimo Bex—if he had flourished in these days,

he would have been a prig of the first water—expressed himself highly gratified with their soldier-like regularity of behaviour.

Upon leaving the common, and getting into the high-road, he formed his army "four deep," and gave them a word of command that does not appear in the drill-books, and had, indeed, rather the air of a battle-cry than of a military order: "Unbuckle belts." Gentlemen-cadets wore neither swords nor bayonets, but their belts had a large piece of metal in the centre with "Ubique" upon it (perhaps because they hit with it "in all directions"), and, when dexterously used, these were formidable weapons. In the hands of a novice it was apt to strike the wielder like a flail; but very few of the young gentlemen of those days were novices in the use of it; and not one who had chanced to have had any difficulty, however slight, with a policeman. There were swarms of Fair people dotted about the lanes—costermongers, itinerant showmen, gipsies, and the like—but with these the advancing army were enjoined not to meddle; they reserved their belts and their "Ubiques" for the hive itself.

The fair was held in a huge field to the right of the road; and when the Cadet Company turned into it, "at the double," but still maintaining their serried ranks, it presented an animated spectacle. The principal space between the booths was crowded with sight-seers, and the booths themselves offered the most varied attractions: "The only Living Mermaid from the South Seas," "The Greatest Professors in the Art of Pugilism now extant," "The Genuine and Original Learned Pig," and a whole tribe of North American Indians in paint and feathers, at that moment in the act of celebrating their national tomahawk dance. For an instant business and pleasure were alike suspended at the sight of our youthful warriors; and then "thwack, thwack" went the Ubique belts, and the denizens of the fair became aware, to their cost, that vengeance had come upon them.

THREATENED GUILDS.

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.

ONE of the few trade privileges still retained by the City guilds is in the hands of the Vintners' Company, members of which can sell wine without further license. Of old the Vintners were fortified by many

enactments, and armed with extraordinary powers. The charter of Edward the Third, recited and confirmed under Henry the Sixth, forbids all men to trade for wine to Gascony except such as are enfranchised of the craft of Vintners; and enjoins that the Gascoigners, when they bring their wines, shall not sell them in small parcels, but in great—by the ton or pipe—that only merchants or wholesale dealers might be the first purchasers. It, moreover, invests the company with the right of trade-search over inferior buyers and sellers, ordaining that the company shall choose each year four persons—of the most sufficient, the most true, and most cunning, of the same craft (that keep no tavern)—to be sworn in before the Lord Mayor, to oversee that all manner of wines be sold at retail in taverns “at reasonable prices;” and also ordains “that all manner of wines coming to London shall be discharged and put to land above London-bridge, against the Vintry; so that the king’s bottlers and gaugers may there take “custom.” Of those great powers all that remains is the privilege of selling wine, as the Goldsmiths retain that of stamping plate and conducting the trial of the pyx, and the Gunmakers prove gun-barrels at their proof-house in Church-lane, Whitechapel, according to the provisions of the Gun-Barrel Act.

Another wealthy and important guild is the company of Clothworkers or Sheremen, originally an offshoot of the Weavers or Tellarii, and, in later times, closely allied with the Dyers. The latter are now a separate body, first in precedence among the minor companies, as the Clothworkers are last of the twelve major companies. The Clothworkers are both wealthy and powerful, and have been proud of their hall, both before and since the Great Fire of London. At no very remote period Clothworkers’ Hall preserved the traditions of the common table, and, as it were, collegiate style of living, which prevailed in the ancient guilds. At the conclusion of the working day the members of the craft betook themselves to the hall, and then and there supped on such wholesome fare as beef-steaks, and smoked their pipes afterwards in serene beatitude. The Clothworkers were ever kindly folk, loving to meet and dine with their fellows; and so convinced was a certain Mr. Thwaites of the good effect of these gatherings, that he left the company at his death twenty thousand pounds, “that they might meet and enjoy

themselves, and recollect the founder of the feast”—a duty most properly and religiously observed unto this day.

Specially under the patronage of Saint Lawrence are the Ironmongers of London, who reverently preserve the image of that holy person, looking so much overfed that little broiling would do him no harm, and holding in his left hand a gridiron much too small for him. The reptiles forming the crest and supporters of the arms of the company are styled “lizards,” but must surely be meant for salamanders. Nevertheless, the Lancaster King-of-Arms, who flourished in the thirty-fourth year of the reign of our “soverayne lord King Henry the sixth,” sets them down as “lizardes of theire owne kynde.” Very frisky they look, chained together and fighting in the crest, and standing erect, as supporters to the shield, with their tongues out as if they thought it was made of sweetstuff.

So much for the twelve great livery companies: the Mercers, Grocers, Drapers, Fishmongers, Goldsmiths, Skinners, Merchant Taylors, Haberdashers, Salters, Ironmongers, Vintners, and Clothworkers; but it must not be imagined that all the interest of City companies is centred in these. There are many bodies both rich and powerful outside of the sacred twelve.

Few crafts were subject to such perpetual legislation as the Butchers. Orders and regulations were made by the king, and by the mayor and aldermen of the City; and it is worthy of notice that the objections to slaughtering animals within the city of London, or near to it, appear to have been as strongly felt five hundred years ago as now, and the offence of bringing to the City markets diseased or putrid meat was regarded with as much sense of the mischief that would arise from its sale, as exists at present. Offenders convicted of selling infectious meat, or meat that had died of the murrain, were punished with peculiar severity. On the 1st of November, 1319, Edward the Second being king, the sworn wardens of flesh meat at the shambles, called “Les Stokkes”—probably by the side of Walbrook, then an open river—seized two beef carcasses, putrid and poisonous, taken from William Sperlyng, of West Hamme, he intending to sell the same at the said shambles. The said Sperlyng, being taken before the mayor and aldermen, acknowledged he intended to sell the beef, but insisted that it was good, clean,

and fit for human food, and demanded inquisition thereon. "And a jury of twelve say, on oath, that the said carcases are putrid and poisonous, and have died of disease." Mark the poetical justice of the penalty. "The mayor and aldermen order the said Sperlyng to be put in the pillory, and the said carcases to be burnt beneath him." This was the favourite punishment of the time for this offence, and was often inflicted in Plantagenet times. Stringent regulations were made to fix the price of flesh, as well as that of fish; and it is interesting to compare the value of the two kinds of food under the first three Edwards. While the best soles were priced at threepence per dozen, and the best turbot at sixpence each, a goose was to be sold for sixpence, a sucking-pig for eightpence, a capon for sixpence, a woodcock for threepence, a carcase of mutton for two shillings, and a loin of beef for fivepence. It was furthermore enacted that no person coming to the City, with young lambs to sell, "shall sell the best lambs at a higher price than sixpence; and that no one of the City shall go into the country to buy lambs, but only those to whom the lambs belong." In spite of the restrictions imposed upon trade by mediæval legislators, the fraternity of Butchers seems to have prospered, for in 1363 divers trades sent presents to the king, and the butchers of St. Nicholas (Newgate) sent nine pounds, the butchers of the Stokkes six pounds, and the butchers of Eastcheap eight pounds. The removal of the refuse consequent on slaughtering cattle in the City was the cause of much difficulty and complaint—not without reason, if we may judge by the frequent and terrible visitations of the plague and other diseases during the middle ages. In 1402 the Butchers obtained permission to use the lane leading from Eastcheap to the Thames (Pudding-lane), and a piece of ground beyond for slaughtering purposes, and made a jetty therefrom into the Thames for convenience in scalding hogs, &c. In like manner the butchers of St. Nicholas were driven, first to the Fleet river, and afterwards—on paper—out of the City. King Edward the Third directly commanded all slaughtering for the City to be done at "Stretteforde" on the one side, and at "Knightsbrigge" on the other. Any butcher offending against this edict was to forfeit the flesh and be imprisoned. Through all this, and more, the craft and

fellowship of Butchers survived till they obtained a charter of incorporation from James the First, just in time apparently to help the Clothworkers with one hundred and fifty pounds in the foundation of the Irish Society—an investment from which Mr. Daw, the historian of the Butchers' Company, doubts that they ever received any benefit. The powers once entrusted to the Butchers have long since passed away, although the slaughter-houses have not; and so has the authority of the Founders' Company over weights and measures, once entirely committed to their control. The Apothecaries' Company, however, issue licenses which let the plucked examinee of the College of Surgeons loose upon the world on easy terms.

As there are companies whose name explains the ancient occupation of their members, so are there others whose designation is occult. That the ancient members of the Horners' Company made bugle horns is conceivable enough; but tell me, "gentle reader," what manner of man is a "Loriner?" In the brief and accurate Livery Companies' Guide, written by that excellent scholar and antiquary, Mr. Overall, the City Librarian, I find the "Loriners' Company" with its master, its upper warden, its under warden, its court of assistants—among whom are men of mark in the city of London—and its clerk. What did they make when they were actually in business? A lory is a kind of parrot or cockatoo. Were they, then, bird-catchers in the foreign trade, or did they deal in dead birds' skins and feathers? No man tells me more than I can learn by the inspection of the company's arms. From these I gather that a "Loriner" should have been a bit-maker; but he may have been a civic horse-marine for anything that is positively known about him. The Spectacle-makers' is a company also remarkable for eminent members; albeit it would hardly occur to one, not City-bred, that the craft of Spectacle-makers was large enough to warrant the formation of a company. Nor is it easy to comprehend that the Musicians, or the Parish Clerks, or the Basket-makers each require a separate organisation. That the Watermen should have a company is conceivable enough, their calling being one of the oldest on record. I am not aware of the patron saint of the Watermen's Company, but surely St. Mary Overy should fill that position,

although the bequest of her fortune for holy works was turned to the prejudice of her ancient craft by the building of London-bridge. Once upon a time the watermen of London were as content, as it is in the nature of watermen and cabmen to be, to take one halfpenny per head for conveying passengers from London to Gravesend; but we soon find them growing more extortionate. In 1293 they "did take from passengers unjust fares, against their will; that is, where they had formerly taken a halfpenny from a person for his passage to London, they then took one penny"—an outrage which led to their being summoned before the sheriff. The prioress of Higham, farther down the river, was a notable extortioner. The ferry across the Thames was her property, and it was complained that her boatmen exacted the enormous price of twopence for every horseman conveyed over, instead of one penny; and from foot-passengers one penny, instead of a farthing—a tax too great to be borne, and quickly regulated by authority. A few years later, Walter Langton, Bishop of Coventry and Lord Treasurer of England, whose family, and menials, and horses cost him six shillings and elevenpence for refreshment at Gravesend and Rochester, paid twentypence for wages and a sailing-boat, for carrying harness from London to Gravesend. There was no doubt about the power of the City over the silent highway, the conservancy of the Thames having been granted to the corporation by a charter of the Lion King, confirmed and enlarged by many subsequent enactments. By John Lydgate's time the fare by barge, sailing, or pulling with the tide, had risen to twopence, for want of which the poet describes himself as unable to "speed." The pace was not severe in the good old times. A letter from the king, at Windsor, to the Privy Council, dated April 28th, 1407, states that his Majesty, "having hurt his leg, and being attacked with ague, his physicians would not allow him to travel on horseback; he hoped to be at Staines that night, and would thence proceed to London by water, where he expected to arrive in three or four days." No doubt the river was alive with boats, and life afloat had its pleasure and dangers, as well as life ashore. One beauty of the old river which, like other things, looks and smells sweetly from afar, appears to vanish on closer inspection. It was not quite so silvery as lovers of the past are fond of

imagining, being, in fact, so choked with garbage and filth flowing out from the Walbrook, the Fleet river, and other affluents, that a fine of forty pounds was inflicted, by the proclamation of 1472, on any person who should throw rubbish or offal of any kind into the river. Notable fights, too, occurred on the not very silent highway. In the reign of Richard the Third happened the great fight between the Merchant Taylors and the Skinners, concerning their right of precedence in the mayor's procession by water. A great feud had existed for a long time, one barge always attempting to get before the other. On the 4th of July, 1483, the king went to the Tower in procession by water, the rival companies struggling for pride of place as usual. Inspired by the presence of royalty, the valiant Skinners and Taylors were not satisfied with a few shrewd blows, but brought cold steel into the discussion, whereby many were done to death, and many more wounded. In consequence of this the matter was referred to the mayor for arbitration, whereupon Lord Mayor Billesdon decided that, for the future, the two guilds should alternately have precedence—except in the case of one of them furnishing the Lord Mayor—and that they should invite each other to dinner on alternate years, to cement brotherly feeling. This custom prevails to this day. One year the Skinners invite the Merchant Taylors, and the next year the Merchant Taylors invite the Skinners. On these occasions, this toast is solemnly drunk: "Skinners and Merchant Taylors—Merchant Taylors and Skinners, Root and Branch, may they flourish for ever, for ever."

Prices made great strides in a couple of hundred years. The waterman who took a passenger to Gravesend for a half-halfpenny could, at the same time, buy a loin of beef for fivepence; while, in 1485, the Drapers' Company paid twelve shillings for two "ribbes of beefe." In the reign of Philip and Mary an extraordinary enactment was passed, "touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the river Thames." After complaining of the general wickedness of everybody afloat, this rescript proceeds to declare "that a great number, and the most part, of the wherries and boats now occupied and used, and of late time made for rowing upon the said river, being made so little and small in portion, and so straight and narrow in the bottom, varying much from the old substantial sort and sure making of boats and wherries, which

was used before the space of twenty years last past, inasmuch, as the most part of boats and wherries used at this day being so shallow and tickle, that thereby great peril and danger of drowning hath many times ensued," &c., that overseers are to be appointed to maintain order on the river, both as to the morals of the Watermen and the safety of their craft; and, moreover, that on pain of forfeit, no person should make "any wherry or boat, to the intent, commonly, to use rowing and carrying of people upon the said river of Thames, which shall not be two-and-twenty feet and a half in length, and four feet and a half broad in the midships," &c. &c. A few years later, an elaborate scale of charges was drawn up for wherries, tilt-boats, and tide-boats. By the Act of 1555, when the first court of the Watermen's Company was constituted, no person could work on the river as a waterman without incurring the penalty of imprisonment, unless he was admitted and registered of the company, or an apprentice, or retained with a master by the whole year; and sailors, who were not so admitted, could not work between their voyages.

By degrees, coaches, sedan-chairs, and, finally, hackney-coaches, damaged the waterman's trade; and he was, moreover, impressed in war-time with terrible severity. But despite the fact that Tom Tug has long since forsaken his trim-built wherry for a lighter, or a steamboat, the worshipful company still lives and flourishes, unlike a kindred company which has passed away. Long ago there actually existed a guild of Water-bearers, who, since Sir Hugh Myddleton turned on the main, have faded away altogether. On old plans of London the water-bearer may be found plying his trade—as necessary in London of old as in the East now. There is no doubt as to the perfect organisation of this ancient craft, but no sign of its existence has been made for many centuries. Like the Water-bearers, the Woodmongers, the Tobacco-pipe-makers, the Marblers, and the Pinners, have lapsed into inanition; funds have dwindled away, members have died off, and the companies have become extinct. The small number of extinct companies speaks well for the vitality of civic institutions. A company may sink to a low ebb, but is always susceptible of revival and expansion to its ancient dimensions. Let us, therefore, dry our tears at the untimely fate of the Water-bearers, Woodmongers, Tobacco-pipe-makers, and Marblers, and

glancing for an instant at the Basket-makers, gaze with a glow of pride at the revived Patten-makers and Clock-makers, the regenerated Shipwrights and Needle-makers. Only a few years ago these companies had almost sunk into dotage, when a sudden infusion of new blood restored them to healthy and vigorous youth. The Needle-makers' Company was hardly so ancient as many of its compeers, for the very excellent reason that needle-making in England is comparatively a new thing. For many centuries needles were imported into England from Spain, where the art of working in steel had been carried to great perfection. According to Fuller, "The first fine Spanish needles in England were made in the reign of Queen Mary, in Cheapside, by a negro; but such was his envy, that he would teach his art to none, so that it died with him. More charitable was Elias Kraus, a German, who, coming over into England, about the eighth of Queen Elizabeth, first taught us the making of Spanish needles." In the preamble of the charter now in possession of the Needle-makers' Company, the formation of the company is justified by the misdeeds of sundry persons who, "for many years past, and still do use and practise many abuses and deceits in making of iron needles, and needles of bad stuff and unworkmanlike, to the great abuse and wrong of the people of this kingdom, and the scandal of the said art or mystery of needle-making;" wherefore, the company was invested with, and for that matter retains, extraordinary powers of search, of imposing fines, and of bringing recalcitrant needle-makers generally to book. A charter of incorporation was first granted to the Needle-makers' Company by Oliver Cromwell, and is remarkable as being the only charter of that kind granted by the Lord Protector. This charter is kept with the other muniments of the company, and is in excellent preservation. It is engrossed on five large skins of parchment, with a curious portrait of Cromwell, as Lord Protector, on the first skin. After numbering among its members such men as George Grote, the company sank into a kind of lethargy; so that, five years ago, it consisted of a nominal livery and of two members of the court. At this juncture, an irruption from the west took place. A compact body of aspirants for civic honours, headed by Mr. J. C. Parkinson, the present master, sought admission;

and, on this being granted, proceeded to thoroughly regenerate the company. The Court of Aldermen have already granted two extensions of the number of the livery, and the Needle-makers' Company now presents the agreeable spectacle of a City company composed of men of eminence in almost all of the higher walks of life. The Clock-makers' Company is another instance of the successful revival of a body which had sunk almost into decrepitude. Having recently added to their numbers several Members of Parliament, and other personages distinguished in the great world, the Clock-makers have essayed to revive, not only the prosperity of their company, but its ancient rights and privileges. From the correspondence which took place, it would appear that certain members of the trade are in the habit of sending foreign-made gold watch-cases, stamped with their own registered punch, under pretence of their being English-made cases, to Goldsmiths' Hall, for the purpose of having them impressed with the English hall-mark, to the end that they, being supplied with foreign works, and thus altogether foreign, might be sold as English-made watches. This practice the Clock-makers' Company desired to put down, and goaded on the Goldsmiths to attack the Board of Trade on the subject, but, of course, got no satisfaction of any kind. The company has been more successful in founding a technical library, containing a collection of works upon the theory and practice of the art of clock and watch making, or connected with horology or general science. They have also a museum, containing many valuable specimens. This library has recently been deposited in the Guildhall Library, and supplied with a catalogue raisonné by Mr. Overall. The Worshipful Company of Patten-makers appeared, a short time ago, very likely to give up the ghost. It was reduced to three members, when the example of the Needle-makers suddenly roused the Patten-makers to a sense of responsibility. Within twelve months this once moribund society has come again to the fore, with a large reinforcement of new members, and now shows every mark of a renewed lease of existence. The very ancient fraternity of Shipwrights, too, was on the point of sinking out of human knowledge, when their craft was, to the astonishment of everybody, careened, calked, and launched anew on a fresh career. Within the present year there has

been a large accession of new members, nearly all connected with the shipping interest. It seems strange, but it is nevertheless true, that the Shipwrights' Company is the only one in London which has connection with the maritime trade.

Thus are decrepit companies transformed into vigorous young bodies by the agency—not of Medea's—but of Messrs. Ring and Brymer's caldron. The tie of conviviality has ever been strong in the City. We have seen how blood-feuds were healed by the pleasant practice of dining and “drynkyng togedre,” and how the ancient life of the guilds was sustained by the practice of dining in hall, then open every day to the fellowship, and not merely on grand occasions of display as at present. As the great nobles moved westward, their fine houses were purchased by various guilds. The Drapers obtained Cromwell's, and to this day retain his beautiful gardens, enlarged by the summary process recorded by Stow. This bright spot of London greenery, however, is doomed at last to bricks and mortar, the pecuniary temptation to build over it having proved too great to be withstood. The Grocers bought Lord Fitzwalter's mansion, and the Slaters secured the residence of the Earl of Oxford. Many conventual buildings also fell, at the time of the Reformation, into the hands of the companies. The Leather-sellers obtained the ancient priory of St. Helen, and turned the refectory, a noble specimen of Gothic architecture, into their common hall; the Pinners removed to the monastery of the Austin Friars; and the Barber-surgeons to the Hermitage of St. James-in-the-Wall. Ample records of their feasts are preserved in the archives of the various companies. Before turtle was invented, and while venison was a common dish, the joyous cits feasted royally upon pike and porpoise, partridge and woodcock. An interesting feature of the great feasts of the year, was the now generally disused custom of crowning the master and wardens with garlands. These garlands were not of roses, be it well understood, but of cloth or velvet, leather or silk, embroidered with the arms of the company, and sometimes furnished with a cap, inside the vertical ring, which constituted the garland proper, or heraldic “wreath.” Caps of maintenance or of honour are to this day used by the master and wardens of the Skinners' Company. The Carpenters also adhere to the ceremony of coronation, using the same caps of honour that existed

three hundred years ago. Besides their caps of maintenance, and their arms, the companies were exceedingly proud of their "livery," a privilege granted in the reign of Edward the Third. The number of persons in each company entitled to wear the livery has always been an important point, subject to the regulation of the Court of Aldermen, who have power both to grant or increase the livery of any company. The powers of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen, indeed, extend to the establishing of a company. It is supposed that all the City companies were founded by royal charter, but this is an erroneous opinion. The Basket-makers were founded by an order of the Court of Mayor and Aldermen in 1569; the Carmen were made a fellowship by the Court of Common Council in 1665; the Founders' Company and the Farriers' Company were enrolled and established by the Court of Mayor and Aldermen, hundreds of years before they received a royal charter. The Inn-holders, the Joiners, and the Painter-stainers, likewise existed long before their royal charter of incorporation. Conversely the royal charter does not carry with it a livery, this being the gift of the Court of Aldermen. Thus the Parish Clerks' Company, incorporated by royal charter, have no livery; and the Shipwrights, without a royal charter, have a livery extended to two hundred. These liveries formed an important part of those pageants with which the atrocious dulness of old-fashioned City life was occasionally broken—of processions by land and water, and of high days and holidays. Ample records are preserved of these great ceremonial events, and the quantity of plunket (blue) and murrey (dark crimson) cloth used is set down with great exactness. So far as can be ascertained, the prevailing colour of the liveries were these—the preference for them being easily explained by their being the colours of the Virgin; but that no hard-and-fast line prevailed for many centuries, is shown by the "livery of red and white" worn by six hundred citizens, who rode to the marriage of Edward the First, at Canterbury, to his second wife Margaret. In 1446, when another Margaret—she of Anjou—was received in London, blue and red was the only wear. "She was met with the mayre, aldermen, and sheriffs of the cytee, and the craftes of the same in blew, with browderyd slevis; that is to meane, everye mystere or crafte, wyth

conysaunce of his mystere, and rede hodes upon eyther of theyre heddes." The early dress consisted of an upper and undergarment, called a "cote and surcote," the gown and hood being reserved for occasions of ceremony. The fashion of the livery gowns has not altered since the reign of Henry the Sixth. In the illuminated charter, granted by that monarch to the Leather-sellers' Company, may be seen the robe and hood, precisely as they are worn to-day. Crowned and garlanded at the banquet, richly attired in the pageant succession, generations of burgesses have passed away under the embroidered hearth-cloths of their respective companies. The men disappear, but the institutions they founded remain, and have beheld, in the present day, a reaction in their favour. Jokes against turtle and venison fall flatly on the ears of this generation, and those who would fain roar about the mismanagement of trusts, are silenced when a single company gives twenty-five thousand pounds to a hospital, as did the Worshipful Company of Grocers only a few short months ago.

A SCHOOLROOM LAMENT.

I FIND it very hard to feed my thoughts
On these dry elements of English grammar;
Analysis of sentences, forsooth!
Dissecting and connecting, hammer—hammer.
Give me a character to analyse;
Simple or complex, prosy or poetic;
A living, moving, breathing specimen,
With reason sound, or sympathies magnetic!

And all this weary round of figures, too,
To my ill-ordered mind has few attractions;
Addition, and division, and the like,
Crushing one's fancies into compound fractions.
Put two and two together, and you solve
Most real life questions, whether grave or funny;
But longest long division fails to prove
How many times is love contained in—money?

Music I love, and long for; yet I find
The terms and laws of harmony perplexing;
For me, provided that a chord is sweet,
To question why 'tis sweet, is merely vexing.
I rather heed the harmonies of life,
With deep and varied tones most strangely blended;
With many and many a dissonance that falls
In perfect cadence, when the piece is ended.

FOREIGN JACK.

FOREIGN JACK has not been distinguishing himself of late—at least, not favourably. People tell me I am but a poor statistician, but even I can measure by the rule-of-three sometimes; and applying that popular arithmetical test to some of the more recent proceedings of Foreign Jack, it appears to me that Jack's credit suffers

in the experiment. Two general mutinies, two subsequent escapes by desertion, a couple of deaths in open fight, seven murders, and half-a-dozen executions, cannot be called a healthy average for the crews of two rather small vessels. I confess, too, that, speaking always under correction and as a mere landsman, it does not seem to me advisable that it should come to be generally recognised as one of the ordinary duties of a steward, to bring home the rest of the ship's company to be hanged for the murder of their officers. I even doubt if they would in all cases be found capable of discharging this new function, and am quite sure they would soon come to demand, if not to deserve, extra pay in consideration of it.

However, Foreign Jack is an institution, and, so long as scoundrels are cheap and shipowners keen, and underwriters accommodating, is likely to remain one. And as institutions are paradoxical things, and often interesting in the inverse ratio of their beneficence, I take an interest in Foreign Jack accordingly.

So, a few days since, my friend Tom Baroda and I set off, under the guidance of an able local pilot kindly furnished us by Captain Furnell, of the Poplar Shipping Office, to look up the private haunts of Foreign Jack in general, and, if possible, of the unhanged Lennie men in particular. Tom, who is young and enthusiastic, is particularly taken with the latter feature of the expedition. He has never, he tells me, "met a murderer" but once, years ago, in San Francisco, when he was quite a lad. And that wasn't a real murderer, you know; at least he had never killed anybody, except in a "difficulty." He was a good fellow, too, it seems, at bottom, and a bit of a dandy—both sure passports to Tom's sympathies—and Tom finally parted from him at a barber's, in New York, where he was having his hair dyed. The homicidal heroes of whom we are in search to-night are of a less romantic and more practical type, and the neighbourhood in which we must seek them is, of course, the classic neighbourhood of Ratcliff-highway.

Before, however, reaching the actual Highway itself, our guide opines that we had better draw the establishment of "Johnny the Greek." The name has a hopeful sound, and the place itself, our guide tells us, has long been one of the largest foreign boarding-houses in the neighbourhood. As, indeed, we find it even

now, though shorn, alas! of at least half its fair proportions, and, with even these, a world too wide for its sadly shrunk connection. Poor Johnny the Greek is dead, and though Mrs. Johnny keeps on the house, and does her best to keep things going, there is but a poor chance now "the man" is gone. Jack—especially Foreign Jack—does not go "looking for lodgings" like ordinary landlubbers. He has all that done for him. Long before his anchor is down, he is surrounded, at a more or less respectful distance, by a whole "school" of touts and crimps, playing about him like so many lively young sharks round a ship with his "yellow" namesake on board. Once his foot is fairly on the greasy terra firma of the Highway, if he be not very soon thoroughly acquainted with all the various merits of all the various establishments of that meritorious, but unsavoury, neighbourhood, it will assuredly not be for lack of enterprise on the part of their exceedingly polyglot representatives. So the stream of custom is cut off before it gets to poor Mrs. Johnny, and the hospitable doors of the Wellclose-square establishment yawn in vain. There is a woe-begone look about the whole place. The large room—large, that is, for Ratcliff-highway—into which you plunge from the street, is bare and silent; and the two huge models of ships which form its only ornaments have a look as though they had been abandoned at sea, and hadn't even a model rat on board. Mrs. Johnny is very proud of these big ships, every rope of whose complicated rigging was set up by her deceased "master," and from whose broadside frowns, as she proudly informs us, a whole battery of real brass guns. But the guns are pointing in all directions; the rigging hangs in bights; the yards are braced anyhow; the trimly-cut sails—poor Johnny was a sailmaker, and cut them every one with his own hand, he did—are but half-hoisted, not quite half-sheeted home, and trimmed as though there had been a mutiny on board, and the cook had taken command, and had not quite made up his mind which way to steer. Upstairs it is much the same. Johnny was an understanding man, and moved with the times, though at a respectful distance in the rear, as a Greek should move, and the principal rooms are furnished with iron bedsteads, pretty closely packed—say, half a dozen or more in a room some ten feet square—but a decided improvement upon the grim

old wooden "bunks," which still occupy the upper rooms, and the mere sight of whose black recesses sets a sensitive skin crawling all over. But the beds are empty; the paper hangs from the walls; there is a yawning gap in more than one of the ceilings. We descend again speedily; not unmindful of the fact that there seem to be almost as many stair-cases as rooms—which must be a convenience sometimes, in the case of unwelcome visitors.

Below, in madame's own snug parlour—with its pictures and its shells, its bunch or two of coral, its case or two of stuffed birds, and its inevitable shark's jaw, grinning, as it were, in quaintly-frank warning over the mantelpiece—we drink, as in duty bound, to the speedy revival of our hostess's prosperity; and in the temporary absence of our hostess herself, gather from an ancient maiden—a faded hanger-on of the faded establishment—some interesting particulars of its prospects and capabilities. The ancient maiden's remedy for all things is "a man." And as she propounds it, not without emphasis, it seems to me that her faded blue eyes rest approvingly upon the bronzed features and stalwart form of my friend Tom. A good-looking young dog is Tom, and not without what Mrs. Johnny, who hails from the Emerald Isle, would call the "laste taste in life" of that jaunty military air which finds such favour in the eyes of the fair. Who knows? perhaps, after all, Tom might do worse.

For the present, however, we postpone the question and pursue our way to the rival establishment of another "Johnny"—this time "Johnny the Chinaman." A very smart gentleman is Johnny the Chinaman, in black cloth coat and trousers and black satin waistcoat, and gold watch-chain, and everything handsome about him. It is a tiny bit of a place this "Fonda Espanol," as Johnny prefers to call it, though he does not seem to talk much more of Spanish than of most other tongues; his general views of language appearing to be of a decidedly "pigeon" character. He understands what "cervesa blanca" means, however, as he would, no doubt, also understand the meaning of a choppe, or a bock, or a pint of bitter; and at the suggestion relaxes a little from that attitude of highly aggressive suspicion with which, like the rest of his fellow-industrials, he greets the first appearance under his hospitable roof of strangers who

clearly are not good for food, and may very possibly turn out to be brother sharks with ever so many more rows of teeth than himself. As he shows us over his tiny, but really very clean and comfortable, little establishment, I notice that he always keeps one lean brown paw in the right-hand trousers' pocket, and speculate as to whether there may not, perhaps, be "one piecey knife" handy somewhere thereabouts. It does not come into play on this occasion, however, and gradually Johnny's suspicions appear to dissipate themselves, till, at length, he relaxes altogether, and, with a melancholy grin, as of a man about to introduce you to the final joy of an exhausted world, leads us across his little back-yard to the special feature of his establishment—the famous opium-smoking room. A drear, little, squalid place truly; a veritable back-door to Paradise. But Paradise lies beyond it, sure enough, and you have only to ensconce yourself snugly in one of the little wild-beast-show-looking cages, and apply your lips for a very brief period to that commonplace bit of bamboo, with the tiny tin bowl screwed on to it, and you will be in the Elysian fields forthwith. Johnny is clearly of opinion that this must be the real object of our visit, and with a piece of stick drops a fresh supply of the thick treacly-looking drug into the little brown penny ink bottle. The melancholy grin fades away from around the sharp yellow fangs as he finds that we are not customers, after all; and though he bows us politely enough off the premises, I somehow don't think that the remarks which, as we go, he exchanges in his guttural polyglot with the Spanish ally who has kindly acted as misinterpreter during the interview, are altogether complimentary.

We are fairly in the Highway now. But, somehow, it is strangely changed from the Highway of old days. Squalid, fetid, loathsome as ever, it is no doubt, the very gruesome ideal of a sojourning-place which shall ensure Jack's prompt return to sea, by offering as few attractions as possible for his stay ashore. But of the old grim frolic and debauchery, the riot of twenty years ago or less, there is hardly a trace. Where is lovely Nan, in the blue or yellow, or crimson satin, that made up for the acres of broad red back and arms and shoulders it left exposed to view, by the miles of train that swept the greasy pavement, and afforded so admirable a basis for the pleasantries that enlivened, and the fisticuffs that cemented friendship? Where

are Bet and Sal, each with an arm round Jack's happy neck; while Poll, to whom—except for this and a few similar aberrations—his heart has, doubtless, been ever true, consoles herself with Bill and a pot of double stout on the roof of a specially-chartered cab? Where are the fiddles and the dances, the bowers of bliss through whose dim and heavy-laden atmosphere came the muffled sound of roaring "Yo! heave, ho!" choruses, or shadowy glimpses of stalwart tars capering lustily by the side of Nan, and Bet, and Sal, and Poll aforesaid? Vanished, vanished all! Not very softly, or suddenly, perhaps, but as thoroughly as if every snark in the neighbourhood—and every shark too, for the matter of that, and they are the more plentiful hereabouts—had been a Boojum from his birth. Their ghosts are here, some of them. Here is "Wilton's," which has grown fine and bloomed into the "Mahogany Bar," and where the gentleman who has been singing a comic song informs us, in all good faith, that the night's *bénéficiaire* thanks us kindly through his "instrumentation." And here are the mortal remains of what was once Paddy's Goose. Paddy's Goose, forsooth! And here is the old "Ratcliff High" itself in its new go-to-meeting guise of St. George's-street; but the neighbourhood is altered almost out of all knowledge.

So much so is this the case that we feel impelled to inquire into the meaning of this striking alteration, and are somewhat startled by the reply. Our informant puts his head a little on one side, looks steadily at us for a moment with the left eye screwed very tightly up, and the right eye very wide open, tilts his hat well forward for more convenient access to the back of his head, and after a thoughtful scratch or two, replies slowly: "Well, I suppose Bryan King had as much to do with it as most people." Whereat I do not screw up either eye, but rather open both to their widest capacity. Bryan King! It is some years since I heard that name, and then surely in a very different connection. I take a moment to recover my breath, and then murmur, half apologetically, half interrogatively, the words, "St. George's-in-the-East? Riots?" My friend tilts his hat a little further over his brows, rises slowly on his toes, sinks slowly to his heels again, nods twice, at the imminent risk of unbonneting altogether, and replies oracularly "Just so. That's what it was all about." I am, if anything, a little more at sea than

before. "Surely the famous St. George's riots were about the Ritualism of Ratcliff-highway, not its morality, and it was the Low Church party—" Whereon my informant cuts in somewhat briskly: "Low Church party be fiddled!" he breaks out, snatching his hat off altogether, and blowing his nose vehemently in a large blue cotton handkerchief, to which it serves as a pocket. "Begging your pardon, I'm sure, sir; but I'm a Low Churchman myself—leastways I hope so—and it puts me out of patience. Them West-end societies as gets their living by setting folks by the ears, they took it up sure enough, as was but natural they should. And a pretty mess they made of it—a-blowing out a farthing dip and setting the whole place in a blaze! Why, Bryan, poor old man! he'd been a-going on Lord knows how many years, and might have gone till now, with his bit of an altar, and his couple of candle-ends, and his half-dozen of brats in white nightgowns, and nobody'd have been none the worse, nor none the wiser, except them as washed the nightgowns and weighed out the candles. And look at 'em now, with their big chapel chock full of people, and processions all over the parish, with crosses and banners, and Lord knows what all, a-singing, and a-chanting, and stopping every now and again to preach a sermon right in the middle of the street. That's what the riots has done for us, sir. But it wasn't none of our doing—leastways not us as lived down here, and knowed how things was. We was a-working with him we was, and doing good work too, as you may see now in these very streets any night. Bless your heart, there was as many of our people in the East London Association, which were what the riots really was about, when we got a-prosecuting the low houses, as was kept by vestrymen and suchlike—ah! as many of us as there was of Bryan King's lot, or pretty nigh it, any way. You go and ask 'em at the Sailors' Home, sir, if you doubt me. They're low enough there, I think, leastways, for me they are. You go and ask them."

The suggestion, even apart from any historical question as to the origin and history of the famous St. George's riots, seems a good one, especially as there is every reason to believe that at the Home we shall find some at least of the Lennie's crew, though not exactly that portion of it of which we are more particularly in

search. Tom's disappointment is great when, on arrival, we find that the steward and his boy friend have left some time since, and that their present whereabouts is not known. However, he is somewhat consoled by hearing that the hero's own government has rewarded his gallantry with a knighthood, and I hear him murmuring softly to himself, as we pass through the long corridors of the Home, "Sir Constant von Hoydonck! Ah!

A very pleasant contrast the Home affords. There is life enough and bustle enough here, though not quite of the old Ratcliff-highway flavour. Lovely Nan, for instance, is, of course, conspicuous by her absence. And Jack is sober. Not "upon compulsion." He is quite of that other famous Jack's mind upon that head; and the directors of the Home have had the somewhat rare good sense to recognise the fact and act upon it. At the first opening nothing but tea, coffee, and similar drinks were allowed in the building. So Jack bestowed a partible or two upon the building, and went and got drunk with Lovely Nan elsewhere. Now beer and wine may be had ad lib., within, I suppose, reasonable limitations; but the limitations are not in any way thrust upon you; and, so far as my knowledge goes, Jack may get as drunk as he pleases. Wherefore Jack stays at home, and does not get drunk. More. Now that he isn't "druv" into drinking "slops," he takes to those innocent beverages very kindly. The chief result, as it would appear, of introducing beer and wine has been an enormous increase in the sale of tea and coffee.

And a very tidy consumption there is of these and of other things. The Home makes up five hundred beds, and these are not enough for the demand. There are sometimes as many as sixty sleeping on or under the tables, for the reason that every berth is full, and Jack wisely prefers an "Irishman's four-poster" in the great hall of the Home, to taking his chance in the Highway. When he does get a berth—and he gets five hundred every night—he gets one to himself: a regular ship-shape little cabin, with plenty of room for his sea-chest, and a nice little ledge where he can write to his own particular Nan—not of the Highway class—and a nice little window for ventilation, and a good lock to the door, and a capital standing bedplace with a spring mattress. Shiver his timbers!

Jack on a spring mattress! Then, in the morning, there is his bath ready for him—a hot bath, if he likes it, bless you!—and just opposite the bath-room is the barber's establishment, where he can have his hair curled, if he has any fancy that way; and where, in point of fact, he is having it curled as we peep in; and grins, and turns, if possible, a shade more crimson than before at finding himself caught in the fact. He would bolt if he could, you may depend upon it, but the barber has him fast by the tongs, and he has to grin, and blush, and bear it.

And then, by the time that Jack is washed, and brushed, and curled, his breakfast is ready—a good solid breakfast, with as much meat, and soft tack, and butter, and "creases," and suchlike, as he can stow away. And then he strolls into the library and reads his papers like a lord till dinner-time comes, and the hot joints make their appearance, and the stews, and the hashes, and the pies, and the roast ducks, bursting with unlimited sage and onions, and beer—bless your dear eyes!—as much beer as ever he likes to call for. And then a stroll down among the ships till tea, with more meat, and more soft tack and butter, and more "creases;" and, two or three nights a week, a cake—not one of your "brother-where-are-you" impostures—a real, downright plum-cake, with no nonsense about it. And then a pipe and a yarn till supper, with bread and cheese and beer unlimited again; and if Jack don't sleep soundly after that, it at all events will not be because he has failed to get the worth of the two-and-two-pence his twenty-four hours' entertainment will have cost him. Nor will he, probably, sleep any the worse for the knowledge that the forty or fifty pounds—more very often—he has just received at the shipping-office is safe in the strong-room downstairs. Considerably upwards of seventy thousand pounds a year is rescued in this way from the clutches of the Highway; and ever so much more might be rescued in the same way if the ruling spirits of other shipping-offices had the sound sense and right feeling of Captain Funnell, of Poplar. Every day, at that gentleman's office, a clerk attends from the Home, takes over from Jack, as he is paid off, as much as he likes to hand over, gives him a cheque for it, and carries it home safely—sometimes to the tune of five hundred pounds in the day. All the crimps and sharks

who lurk, thirsting for the blood of Jack, in the thievish corners of the unsavoury streets that intervene between Jack's pay-office and his lodgings, feel shamefully defrauded of those five hundred pounds, you may be sure.

Altogether, Tom's view of the Home as "really an awfully jolly notion, you know!" does not strike me as in any way exaggerated. Tom, indeed, is so smitten with the place that, when by-and-by I miss him for a time, I am half inclined to think he must have taken possession of one of the cabins en permanence. Presently, however, he reappears, looking a trifle sheepish, and excusing himself by saying that he had "dropped something." Tom is a truthful young man, and I have no doubt that he has dropped something; only, as I happen to remember that a little way back we passed a box with a slit in it, and that the Home, though self-supporting, is seeking funds for purposes of extension, I am inclined to fancy that it was something more substantial than a tear or even a pocket-handkerchief; also I am inclined to fancy that, whatever it was, Tom might have dropped it elsewhere to less advantage.

Equally laudable and, in its way, equally useful is the smaller sister establishment next door, known, in Jack's poetic lingo, as "the Straw House," and to ordinary mortals as the Destitute Sailors' Asylum. Hither comes Jack when he has not availed himself of the services of the Home bank; when the thievish corners of the streets have been pitfalls to him; and when the sharks have got at him, and worked their will upon him. He does not get a separate cabin here, but is hung up in a hammock on a big towel-horse, among a whole laundryful of other towel-horses similarly occupied. And in the morning he gets a less sumptuous breakfast, and doesn't have his hair curled, and is sent about his business to look for a ship until the evening. When he has found one, and is asked for his last night's address, he hums and haws considerably, fences with the unpleasant question as sea-lawyer-like as he may, and finally puts up his huge red paw to his mouth, and grunts bashfully from behind it, "Straw House." Next voyage he probably steers straight for the Home, especially if he be lucky enough to be sent to be paid off by Captain Funnell.

And so we turn out into the Highway again, and pursue our search through

another dozen or two of boarding-houses, all more or less of the type of Johnny the Greek's, or Johnny the Chinaman's, and all more or less dingy and uninviting, though, on the whole, less so than might be expected, for they have to compete with the solid attractions of the Home, and can no longer afford to indulge in absolute squalor. And presently we hear news of the Lennie men, and find ourselves in a little outfitter's shop on the north side of the street, the back of which opens into a large living-room, fitted and ornamented in the usual way; but, on the whole, decidedly superior, and particularly clean and bright-looking. Not by any means the sort of place in which we should expect to find those of whom we are in search; any more than the tall, fair young Greek woman, with the pretty, rather sad-looking face, and pleasant, but not merry smile, is the sort of landlady with whom we should expect to find them. Tom, who is of a sentimental turn, dubs her the "Maid of Athens" on the spot, and shakes his head vehemently at me in protest against the idea of there being any murderous connection here. Wherein he turns out to be correct. The Maid of Athens repudiates the notion with some warmth; cannot at all imagine why people should have set such a rumour about; and has already written to Lloyd's News to refute it. We confound ourselves in apologies, Tom especially—though, I fancy, a little disappointed by a casual reference on the "Maid's" part to her "husband"—assuring her warmly that he had never believed it for a moment. So the fair, sad face clears up, and the pleasant smile comes fluttering out again; and the "Maid" informs us where the Lennie men really are, and where, in due course, we find them.

A likely place enough this—the sort of place wherein murderers might fitly meet, and murders appropriately be planned. A villanous-looking beerhouse of the true Highway type—low-ceilinged and dingy-windowed; the floor gritty with yesterday's, and last week's, and last year's mud; the walls and ceiling black with fumes of smoke, and drink, and flaring gas, and unwashed humanity; the glazed door painted over to baffle curious eyes, but quite thickly enough coated with dirt to render this a very superfluous precaution; the notched and splintered counter slimy with the dregs of the grisly compound which goes here by the name of beer, and

of which a slatternly, beetle-browed Hebe, with sodden face and ragged black elf-locks, and a greasy black gown pinned loosely across her chest, serves us each, scowlingly, with a battered and sticky tankard. Evidently our appearance is not viewed with favour. The conversation, which was loud enough as we entered, drops suddenly for a few moments, to be resumed only in low growls and hoarse whispers. We are in good company evidently—of the sort which does not greatly care for the intrusion of strangers or missions not clearly enounced—of the sort which commonly has a knife about it somewhere, and does not restrict its use exclusively to the cutting of bread and cheese. It is an English company, however, as its conversation—made up, of course, chiefly of participles and adjectives—shows; so our men are not there. But presently, Tom, whose ears seem to prick themselves up like a terrier's at a rat-hole, jerks his elbow into my ribs, and nods meaningly at a half-open door in the back wall, through which can be caught a glimpse of an inner den, a trifle grislier than the first. The next moment he has shouldered the door open and lounged in, pot in hand, among half-a-dozen or so as cut-throaty-looking gentlemen as, in the course of a somewhat variegated career, I have often encountered. Not of the tatterdemalion order, by any means; on the contrary, rather well-dressed than otherwise; and one, at least, with gold watch and chain. But, if looks may be relied upon, we have found our men at last, clearly; and equally clearly our men are not delighted at having been found. One, who in his first surprise addresses us in very tolerable English, suddenly forgets that language, and asks, as the chief captain asked St. Paul, "Canst thou speak Greek?" Our acquaintance, however, with the language of Homer is rather classic than colloquial—on the whole, perhaps, rather limited than either. Tom grunts through his beard something about a desirable conjugation of the verb *τυττω* which it is perhaps as well that the present representatives of the Achæians do not understand; and we lapse into a sort of lingua Franca of a decidedly "bono Johnny" type, which, however, with due aid from pantomime, suffices to express our desire for friendly relations, as symbolised and cemented by the interchange of drinks.

The conversation languishes, however,

Tom's contributions in particular being few and feeble, and his mind evidently preoccupied. I know what he is doing well enough. He is trying hard to solve the important question which of these half-dozen candidates for hempen honours, now doubtfully passing our sticky pewters from hand to hand, are the three who so unfortunately failed in the late competitive examination at the Central Criminal Court. Even Tom has hardly "cheek" enough to put the question in plain terms; and, indeed, from a certain hardening of the lines about the mouth, and a nervous tendency on the part of the strong brown knuckles to contract into the form in which they have ere now done yeoman's service on the countenances of more than one of her Majesty's more objectionable subjects, I am inclined to fancy that honest Tom does not find his "real murderers" quite such congenial society as he may possibly have anticipated. He confesses, indeed, to me, afterwards, that the temptation to "go for some of these blackguards was awfully strong, you know;" and its ingenuous expression in Tom's undiplomatic face does but little towards allaying the shyness of our suspicious friends. Presently their suspicions receive a fresh and powerful impulse, as they notice for the first time that our guide, who has remained in the outer bar, and who, as luck will have it, is a teetotaller, has clearly no business here but that of watching our party, which he is just now doing with very special vigilance. Simultaneously it flashes on them that neither Tom nor I have more than just put our lips to the villanous compound which we have been so hospitably handing round, and which, in its normal state, probably does not present itself to their view in quite so poisonous a guise as to ours. Whereon it speedily becomes clear enough who is who. The right hands of all jerk instinctively towards their waist-belts; but three of the men turn an ugly mud colour, and the brows close down upon the gleaming black eyes. One jumps quickly up, and kicks to the door. Another squirts upon the floor the yet unswallowed mouthful of beer, and licks his white lips nervously, as though in search of unsanctioned savours. The third fills rapidly from the discarded pot a couple of grimy tumblers, and, recovering his English as suddenly as he just now lost it, pushes them over to us, with the significant invitation "You drink that." For a space, the

situation, as our allies across the Channel would say, is of a certain tension. There are decided symptoms of an approaching row. But Tom is a thorough soldier, and is pledged not to "go for" anyone without the word of command. And the word of command is not given. Two pair of fists to half-a-dozen knives are odds such as, in my experience, are more eagerly encountered on the sunnier than the shadier side of thirty. So I, as responsible commanding-officer, put my feelings discreetly in my pocket, and swallow the horrible decoction as smilingly as I may. Tom, as a well-disciplined subaltern, gulpingly follows suit. Poor Tom! Only at home on leave for the express purpose of saving, if possible, what yet remains of his liver!

And so suspicion is partially averted, and the atmosphere clears again. Only partially, however. Our company is still considered as anything but desirable, and as the party is evidently breaking itself up, we accept the hint and retire. As we once more gain the comparatively respectable pavement of the Highway, I inquire of Tom whether he would care to see anything more of Foreign Jack to-night.

But Tom is quite certain that he has had enough of Foreign Jack, not only for to-night, but for all time, and, as I am of the same mind, we toddle clubwards.

WINDOW GARDENING.

THE love of admiration is far from being an altogether reprehensible sentiment. Although indulged in for the gratification of self, it cannot be gratified without first effecting the gratification of others. The public, who supply the admiration, are repaid by having something to admire. A noble mansion, a handsome park, a well-kept garden, afford pleasure to others besides their owner. The pleased beholders may be innumerable, whereas their owner is only one, or at most one family and their circle of friends. The same may be said of a well-mannered, well-dressed woman. If single, she has no owner but herself. If she wishes for another owner, she is adopting the very means to get one. People who care little about dress beyond its decencies and proprieties, may still like to arrest attention by adorning their houses with attractive decorations. There are cockney-gothic elevations

which it is impossible to pass without a look—not to say a stare. There are vases, statues, columns, balustrades, more or less congruous, but all, for praise or blame, remarkable. Perhaps the most harmless and least obtrusive way, especially in towns and streets, of begging the stranger to bestow an approving glance, is to fill a window tastily with pot-plants.

Of course the window gardener will never confess to troubling himself whether people look at his display or not. It is his own love of green leaves and flowers, his interest in the vegetable kingdom, and nothing else, which has brought the bright collection together. I say "his" in a comprehensive sense, to avoid the awkwardness of "his or her." For the amateur exhibitor is often a lady; as may be seen when a pretty girl is searching for dead leaves, although perfectly aware that none are there. Having beheld her so occupied one day, you look in the next; and are rewarded by the discovery that her governess, or her grandmother, has not yet renounced the search for dead leaves. But the profession of indifference to public approval contains a certain dash of hypocrisy. Being in the secret, I may brush that flimsy pretext aside. The truth is that there is a combination of motives. It is neither all foolish vanity and love of show, nor pure philobotany, study of vegetable forms, and enthusiastic love of the beauties of nature. If the cultivator did not like plants, he would not cultivate or purchase them. If he were indifferent to other people's admiration, he would put his most charming specimens anywhere else, quite as willingly as in his most conspicuous window. It is not for him that full many a flower is born to blush unseen. There are two parties to be gratified—the great world outside the window, and the small private knot within it.

When once a resolution has been formed to follow up this line of horticulture, it is prudent to confine the show to one window, or at most to the windows of one apartment, unless the exhibitor has great resources to draw upon. Anybody with a long purse, and taste therewith, can keep up a display by going to the nurseryman's, and buying fresh plants, as soon as those in possession begin to fade. Such an amateur, however, is hardly a window gardener, but only a decorator of windows.

To have one window that shall keep

up an unflagging reputation all the year round, it is needful to have several unseen windows to which plants can retire after they have played their part. Annuals will scarcely appear on the stage more than once. They have their day; after which they may sigh "*Sic transit gloria mundi!*" But perennial plants can no more make incessant efforts to please, than great singers or great actors. After a brilliant, perhaps prolonged and exhausting, floral, vocal, or dramatic display, they require an interval of repose, to recruit their strength before beginning to show off again, during which time of stand at ease they should feed well, abstain from excess of stimulant, and avoid draughts of air and needless disturbance. With floral gems, this temporary halt of green-room retirement is different from their period of rest, which may often be passed in a cellar, a cupboard, or a box which shuts in vitality by shutting out frost. For human stars—unless they make their fortunes, or grow sick of the public's plaudits—the latter contingency being, however, so rare that it may be omitted from our calculations—there is no rest but what is forced upon them: shelving, superannuation, final earthing-up.

Better, when it can be had, than the supplementary windows, and invaluable as a supplement to that supplement, is a nice little greenhouse in a little garden at the back of the house, enjoying a fair share of sunshine in summer, and with the frost kept out in winter by contiguity to the kitchen, perhaps helped by a flue proceeding therefrom. With these, seconded by judicious selection and forethought, you may enjoy a never-ending succession of beauties. So aided, you will be enabled to link autumn, horticulturally and florally, with spring, especially if you have the self-restraint to set bounds to your ambition in respect to quality and numbers.

On my daily way to school I found out a window which invariably beguiled the tedium of the walk. If school had been hateful, that window would have made it bearable; with no particular dislike to school, the half-way window rendered it attractive. At all seasons there were about half-a-dozen pretty pot-plants; sometimes there might be five, sometimes seven; but never an overcrowded thicket, struggling desperately for life and light. Nor was the window ever vacant. As soon as one nice little thing was over, another charmer took its place. I had

not then read *Lalla Rookh*—I doubt if it would have been allowed, and it was, besides, beyond my comprehension—or I should have exclaimed:

Like the waves of the summer, as one dies away,
Another as sweet and as shining comes on!

Its triumph, perhaps, was in early spring, or rather late winter, when flowers are beyond all price. First, we had snow-drops, up and out before their time, with a golden tuft of winter aconite, otherwise new-year's gift, beside them. Then came scarlet Van Thol tulips, the double yellow wallflower, the blue-rayed Cape cineraria—*C. amelloïdes*, to give it its original Linnean name, instead of *De Candolle's*, *Agathæa*—followed by auriculas, then the idols of florists, and the American cowslip with that beauty of beauties, the camellia, double white and double red. Sometimes, probably for want of a plant in flower at that moment, a place in the window was occupied by a cactus, a foreign sempervivum, a partridge-breasted or a pearl-bearing aloe, or other curious succulent; for succulents then were in much greater favour than of late, although they seem to be coming in again. Fashion in flowers, like history, has a tendency to repeat itself.

One quarter-day brought doleful disaster. The pleasant window was closed with shutters. Still there was hope of its re-opening on the morrow. Next morning all hope was gone. The window was furnished with muslin curtains, very coarse but very clean. Some new tenant had arrived, who hated nasty geraniums and all that sort of thing, which only serve to make a litter and harbour dust and flies. The light of the school-path was suddenly extinguished; but childhood is soon reconciled to the irremediable. Submission to destiny was, in this case, recompensed. A few days afterwards, just started for school, I beheld, close to home, exactly such another window, with exactly the like plants. The admired exhibitor had become a neighbour; and inquisitive youth soon contrived to learn that the plants, which did not seem to have suffered during travel, had been moved with as much care as the furniture and the children. I also learned the grand secret of the supply—the little greenhouse at the back of the house, which in this locality was fully open to the south, and was perhaps the leading motive of the removal.

Since that time, the window gardener has a greater choice and a wider range of

cultivation. The "nasty" geranium still holds its own, reinforced by varieties with double flowers. The new tricolours too render great assistance, by putting in a gay appearance of foliage when blooms run short. What a sensation Mrs. Pollock made when first she came out! But she loses her bright complexion when stinted of air and light, as is inevitable in winter. The tricolours now are numerous. The best I know to retain its hues under adverse circumstances is Lady Cullum, which also unites brilliant scarlet flowers with richly-tinted foliage.

Enormous as is the world of pot-plants before you where to choose, it will take sundry trials and more than one season's experience, before you hit on those which exactly suit at the same time your window and your personal predilections. Individual specimens or species on which you find that you can depend year after year, deserve to be treated like long-trying friends. A favourable opinion of an untried plant is easily and safely adopted; if it do well at once, it is a good plant—it takes its place on your staff, and there is an end of the matter. An adverse judgment, on the other hand, should be more slowly and cautiously pronounced. A plant which you have obtained for the sake of one expected quality, which has failed, may afterwards and later on manifest another which will ensure its retention.

I received in a growing state—doubts may be entertained whether it ever ceases to grow—a mere scrap of *Begonia Richardsoniana*, a garden hybrid, together with some dormant tubercles of the new bulbous begonias, which, by the way, make attractive summer pot-plants, with the great convenience of dying down to the ground in autumn, and remaining quiet till April or May. These, after being started in pots, were turned out of doors to decorate the open border. Little *Richardsoniana* took its place in the rank. The others put forth their bright cups and tassels, while Dicky did nothing but show inconspicuous white flowers, and make a few dull little jagged leaves. When the bulbous B.'s were lifted in October, what was to be done with poor little Dick? Throw it away? No. 'Tis so small and costs so little to keep. Pot it, through charity, and give it house-room.

All winter it kept growing at tortoise-speed, living on without giving trouble, or asking for anybody's notice or favour. And when called out to pass the spring

review, it was found to have become a nice little tree only a few inches high, of fastigate habit, like a Lombardy poplar under Chinese dwarfing; with branches, leaves, and trunk, all in proportion; even to the tiny blossoms, which, magnified, would fit a tall arborescent magnolia. With us, therefore, *B. Richardsoniana* holds its own, as a compact little type of multum in parvo; and it strikes so readily from cuttings, if you wish to oblige a friend who is fond of "neat things!"

A plant may fail to do itself justice because your mode of management, or your soil, is such as just to allow it to live on, in wretched plight, without ever having the vigour to develop its peculiar beauties and merits. In ordinary upland garden soil, if stiff, hard, and clayey, Japan lilies, and especially the gorgeously-gilded *L. auratum*, will make but an unsatisfactory return for all the pains you may bestow upon them. Try them another year in a compost of which heath mould or even black bog-earth is the principal ingredient, and you will have worked a change which looks almost miraculous—you will have a firm stem, instead of a withered reed; dark green adherent leaves, replacing yellow caducous scraps; blooms with perfect health blushing on their petals; and, above all, plump, well-swollen, stout-scaled bulbs, promising still better things for the following season. But lilies in general, however sweet their smell, emit it, when kept in closed apartments, too powerfully to agree with individuals who are unable to bear any penetrating perfume. Outside, or in a balcony—properly supported by sticks, and not exposed to gusts of wind—they are valuable window garden-stock, being permanent contributors to the show year after year.

Of such importance is suitable soil, that cunning gardeners will compose you soils containing, or deficient in, certain elements which they are aware that certain plants either like or loathe. They will take as much forethought about the earth in which they establish each plant as physicians do about the "waters" to which they recommend each patient to resort. Thus, if obliged, by the nature of the district where you live, to use very light soil for pelargoniums, you will find it suit them better by mixing with it, reduced to powder, a small quantity of yellow clay, stiff loam, or other argillaceous earth. On the other hand, the presence of even a small proportion of lime renders earth unfit for rhododendrons, kalmias, azaleas, and the

numerous other genera commonly known as American plants. Many leguminous plants—such as sweet peas, annual and perennial—agree with stone-fruits (cherries and peaches) in liking an admixture of chalk or gypsum.

Soil may not only be uncongenial in itself, but it may contain unsuspected enemies of vegetable life. For instance, leaf-mould is believed to be an almost universal panacea for ailing plants. It is certainly excellent when the mass contains leaf-mould only; but being made of decayed leaves, rotten grass, straw, moss, weeds, and other vegetable rubbish, left to decompose two or three years—the older it is the better—and often turned over and exposed to the air and light, it is frequently full both of the seeds of weeds and of the eggs and grubs of insects, which prove not only troublesome but seriously destructive. Woe to the gardener who plants a choice specimen in leaf-mould containing eggs or larvae of the crane-fly, or the cockchafer. He will commonly not discover the cause of the mischief done until it is too late to apply a remedy. A safe plan, when fresh leaf-mould is obtained for potting—and an easy plan when only moderate quantities are required—is to subject it, first, to gentle heat, to cause the seeds of weeds to germinate, and then to a higher temperature—slightly cooking it, in fact—which shall cause worms, insects, and their eggs, to find the place too hot to hold them. Once killed, they supply manure, instead of committing ravages.

In the flower markets of most large towns, leaf-mould, or light compost imitating it, is offered for sale. The quantities so purchased being always small, there can be little difficulty in giving it a warming sufficient to destroy any germs it may contain. This branch of commerce might be extended with advantage. Supply would stimulate demand; for people, however much they may be in want of a thing, do not often ask for it when they know beforehand that it is not to be had. Dwellers in cities are reduced to great straits for earth in which to pot their flowers, and they would be glad of really good fresh soil to substitute for the black dust which they are obliged to scrape together as they can, and use over and over again for plants to grow in.

Perennials are the most useful window plants, and more especially those which, requiring little care in winter in conse-

quence of becoming dormant, can be stowed away in any dark, dry corner, whose temperature never falls to the point of freezing. But, as regards the selection of species, one can only say: "Every man to his taste." There are two categories of window plants; showy, staring things which fix everybody's notice—a blaze of bright colour is by no means to be despised—and plants with some special interest belonging to them, of remarkable form or singular habits, of medicinal or commercial value, souvenirs of the gardener's travels, and so forth. Tobacco is a noble annual; the cotton plant, kept warm enough, is far from ugly; camomile repays the eye with its soft, dark-green, mossy foliage; knotted, otherwise pot, marjoram is perhaps the sweetest of sweet herbs. I have seen angelica used—before preserving in sugar—to fill a balcony with its noble balsamic foliage.

A few fenestral enthusiasts delight to decorate their house-fronts with a many-tinted tapestry of floral garlands hanging outside from window to window. Fine examples catch the eye in Flemish towns, both Belgian and French. It is a beautiful but brief mode of ornamentation, which can hardly appear in full force till after midsummer, and which is swept away by the first gale and great depression of temperature in autumn. The materials are within everybody's reach—climbers mostly, or at least free growers; convolvulus, cobæa, the old nasturtium—*Tropæolum majus*—in diverse shades; the elegant canary-bird flower—*Tropæolum aduncum*—a Mexican plant which even seedsmen persist in calling *T. canariense*, though it is no more canariense than they are canary-birds themselves; maurandias, scarlet and painted lady-runner beans, sweet peas, hops—objectionable, because apt to harbour aphides—ivy, with a long appendix of *et ceteras*.

The management is not everybody's business; the plants must be fed, and that well, like nestling birds, on the principle of little and often, sometimes much and often. With overcrowded roots cramped in boxes, watering once a day will not suffice, nor twice, nor any stated number of times. The supply must be entirely guided by the requirements of the vegetable pensioners. The exhaling surface of their leaves is enormous; and if it be not liberally met, with a hot sun shining and a dry wind blowing, half-an-hour's neglect will be long enough to convert the whole

curtain of verdure into hay. Liquid manure will render great service, if judiciously administered in small quantities from time to time. But the grand rule is, that you must cultivate such a window garden yourself, and not leave it even for half-a-day to servants or deputies. If you do, it will share the fate of many a pet bird during your pleasant month by the sea. On your return, you find them lying dead at the bottom of their cage. The housemaid left in charge protests: "I'll make my 'davy I didn't neglect 'em. Dear little creatures, I loved 'em too well. Only look, mem; there's plenty of water in their fountain, and the seed-drawer is as full as it can stick."

PHOEBE: GIRL AND WIFE.

BY PERCY FITZGERALD,

AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN," "THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON," &c. &c.

CHAPTER LII. AT LAST A BREAKDOWN.

"My daughter cannot return to you, or see you again, until you have made the most ample atonement for the disgraceful conduct of the other night, and until an engagement be given that she will be treated with more kindness than she has hitherto received. Only for a gentleman who came to her assistance, she might have spent the night in the streets."

Such was the letter that Mr. Pringle received after this unpleasant occurrence. He was already feeling uncomfortable at what he had done, and nervously apprehensive of the consequences; but he was defiant.

"If they wait for that," he thought, "they will wait long." And he determined that "no power on earth" should get him to take any such step. But what if Tom should be sent for? He winced at the very idea.

And now, by a rueful coincidence, came a rush of troubles, pouring in and overwhelming him. The truculent butcher, who had returned, as he had threatened, and found nothing satisfactory, was not slow to exact heavy punishment; before many days had gone, all the furniture of the little house was seized under a bill of sale, and the curtain fell on the little short-lived piece of housekeeping.

Our Phoebe had been very unhappy during these days. Notwithstanding her "cruel injuries," she did not feel them as her mother wished, though she was of

course willing to display a certain amount of spirit. She felt lonely and solitary; though when she contrasted her husband's coldness and harshness with the chivalrous behaviour of the stranger, she felt a pang of doubt. "If I had such a friend as that—someone to advise me!" she thought, on the second day after these events.

She had told his share in her rescue to her mother, who knew all about him, as she did about everyone. "Brookfield—a good old family. But there's something about him that I heard—about a disappointment in love, or his wife running away with someone; but he's a most important personage."

Almost as she spoke the maid entered with the card of the gentleman in question.

"You'd better see him yourself," said Mrs. Dawson.

"Oh yes! I must thank him!" cried Phoebe, excited as usual. "He was so kind; and I want to explain—What am I to say?"

Accordingly Mr. Brookfield was shown up. It was an awkward meeting, for he was in possession of an awkward secret; but he soon reassured Phoebe.

"I only came," he said, "just to tell you this. I am afraid you may think that I am one of those gossips that tell everything. It would be affectation—indeed, I could not expect you to believe me—if I said that I did not understand the meaning of what took place last night; but, as far as I am concerned, no one shall ever learn a word of it. I wish you to be quite easy on that point."

"It is most kind of you; and I don't know what I should have done but for you. Oh, it was too terrible," she added, covering her face with her hands.

"I hardly know what to say," he said. "If I sympathise with you—"

"Yes, I can understand," said she; "you will appear to condemn my husband. But I cannot tell you how much I am obliged to you. It is long since I met such real kindness," she added, warmly, unconscious that she was actually condemning her husband.

He had turned his thoughtful face to her, and the coquette Phoebe, with all her troubles, was afterwards pleased to speculate that she had made a deep impression on him. "I do think," she said, in her light way, to her mother, "that he is quite in love with me!"

"I have no right or title," he went on, "to say what I am going to say; but just

as you accepted my humble service—such as it was—so you might be inclined to let me offer my aid in other ways when you should have occasion for it. It will please me, I assure you, to give it; and you will be doing me a favour to accept it. I am now going down to some friends in the country. I must tell you that you have really inspired me with an interest; so that if you have no objection to my working in your service, I shall be glad to do so."

"Oh, what kindness!" said the pleased Phoebe. "How good of you!"

There was a certain charm about this grave visitor, and the kindly interest there was in his manner. Phoebe felt, she knew not why, that this was the first friend she had met with for years. Of course this was fanciful, but these impressions do come, and are difficult to account for.

Mrs. Dawson, having allowed a due interval to pass to admit of the interchange of grateful feelings, felt it was now time to intervene, and secure so useful an acquaintance on a business foundation. So she entered, with bonnet on, as though she had just returned from walking; and, with a "Phoebe, dear, Mrs. Philabeg is waiting to see you," dismissed her daughter.

She soon "took his measure," as she termed it. "My dear," she said to her daughter, "did you ever see such a handsome creature? And such a finely-cut lip! Such a sweet voice too! I am quite charmed with him. And I've found out all about him. He is well off and monstrously clever, and he was in love with a most beautiful girl, who jilted him on the evening before the marriage. And he's going down to some people in the country, who, I am sure, would be glad to get him. He admires you, I can see. I know it's not right to put such things in a young married woman's head, but upon my word I believe he's taken a fancy to you. There's no harm in it, I am sure."

Poor Phoebe forgot all her troubles in this flattering compliment. Admiration, "were it only that of a coal-heaver," to use her mother's phrase, was ever welcome. It must be said that originally this was connected with what she most of all desired, the admiration of her husband; and she felt that such appreciation might increase her value in his eyes. But the insult that she had received had been too much. She was grown hard and defiant,

and would never pass it over. Her mother did not quite take the same view. "We must put up with these things, my dear. I remember your poor father used to turn me out of the room like a child when I displeased him, and I used to threaten, and scream; but certainly I did provoke him a great deal."

"It shall never be done again to me," said Phoebe, with compressed lips, "never. And he shall beg my pardon on his knees for this."

That very evening the door opened, and Mr. Pringle entered the room. Phoebe rose up in her stateliest way to leave it.

"You needn't go," he said.

"What! after turning me out of my own house, you come into my presence?"

"You have no house now," he said, covering his face. "It has come at last. They have seized everything; and I myself have been turned out. I am a wretched outcast, without anything left to me."

His face was full of a helpless despair. In an instant she had flown to him, and was fondling and patting him, as if she had some cherished little dog in her arms. All was forgotten, and, indeed, she added the curious speech:

"I am so glad! Now that you are really poor, you will be mine altogether. And we can take a little lodging now; and I will show you that I can work for you."

He had not the spirit to be impatient, or this speech would have made him so.

Mrs. Dawson, when she heard of this state of things, threw her eyes upwards, and said:

"You have made a pretty kettle of fish of it between you. Remember, I told you you would be glad to come to the old woman one day. Well, you can have a bed, and your bit and sup with me."

Thus had the episode that began so romantically at the garden-gate of the Misses Cooke's academy, worked itself out to this disastrous issue. And here we shall leave this luckless pair, to learn such lessons as disaster can impart, while a period of six months—as the playbills have it—is supposed to elapse before the next act begins.

CHAPTER LIII. THE FAMILY AGAIN.

ONCE more we turn to Joliffe's Court, after the family have laboured yet another season on the London fashionable road, breaking stones, desperately trying to "get on," and know nice people.

It was heartbreaking work, almost as hard as ever, although the family had,

indeed, made way, owing, it must be said, to the valuable tact and assistance of their guest, Miss Lacroix. Her advice had rarely ever failed to produce results, and she contrived to give this help without wounding their pride. Neither did she interfere with the young ladies, though there were several occasions when gentlemen sought to offer her attentions, which she diverted to their proper objects in a suitable and effective manner. There could be no doubt that it was she who "laid on" the little pack in the track of the young Lord Greenhithe, the Earl of Wapping's eldest son, and his cousin the Hon. Edward Slingsby, and conducted the operations—which, in every instance hitherto, had been contrived in a feeble and purposeless fashion—in a masterly and effective manner. The Pringles wondered, and admired, and admitted her superior genius. And it was she who had put into old Sam's head that daring scheme which was now absorbing all the faculties of the family—nothing short of his coming forward to stand for the county, in the place of Sir Gilbert Homerton, who was failing, and, indeed, not expected to live very long.

"Mind," she said in her quiet way, "I don't want to flatter you, or to say that you will succeed, for that I know nothing about; but, with your fortune and position, you are certainly entitled to look for it."

And she it was who certainly first offered, to the aspiring eyes of Mrs. Pringle and the girls, the glittering bait of the baronetcy which the family felt that their position also entitled them to look for. What was wealth without honours? A feverish longing took possession of them to get on this yet higher step of the ladder.

People were often curious about this Miss Lacroix—who she was? where did she come from? How was it "that the Pringles had taken her up?" But there was always the satisfactory answer forthcoming: "A daughter of a clergyman," who had been left totally unprovided for. "Then a couple of old spinsters, that kept a school"—here old Sam would take up the narrative—"tried to make a drudge of her; but she was too high-spirited to stand that, and she gave them the slip, sir. And a very worthy woman took a fancy to her, and adopted her, and left her a hundred and fifty pounds a year in her will. So she is quite independent, you see. Fit to be the wife of a cab. minister; and, indeed, more fit to be a cab. minister than some of the fellows that

are now driving the state." Then Sam would declare that she deserved a rich, well-to-do husband, whose fortune she would make. "And I mean that she shall have one, if she'll only wait long enough;" and Sam, by his winking, conveyed that he knew of such a partner, and of one who was actually waiting at that present time of speaking. "And now," added Sam, "she's got a perfect treasury here," pointing to his head, "that will astonish the world yet. She's writing a novel that will set Paternoster-row on fire, sir. Such observation of life and manners; such character; all our friends brought in; done with a master or mistress-touch!" It was fortunate that the lady thus panegyricised did not hear these rather compromising, though well-meant, encomiums.

Not the least benefit which she had conferred on the family, and which really endeared her to them, was her interposing between them and that serious incubus—as she had now grown to be—Lady Juliana. Rebuffed, neglected, snubbed, this thick-skinned personage remained immovable, finding a justification for the assaults made upon her in smarting speeches, cuts, and sundry talkings at "the family" in presence of visitors; exercising, in short, a sort of terrorism which was her security. This nearly poisoned all their happiness. She had come on a visit to the family, which it was understood was to last for a month or six weeks; but when that period had elapsed the lady showed no signs of movement, and alluded carelessly to future events a month off, in which she spoke of participating—some ball or festival. Consternation settled on the family at this news; and Sam, coming in later, full of spirits, noted the blank faces, and was told the reason.

"Oh, this is not to be stood," he said; "I'll have the old woman on me all my life. I'll just tell her plainly at dinner that she must walk. What do you say, my sweetheart?" he added, turning to Miss Lacroix.

"Mr. Pringle, I told you before not to address Miss Lacroix in that style. She doesn't wish it, I am sure?"

"It is most disagreeable to me," said the lady; "and I would request Mr. Pringle, as a favour, to discontinue it."

"Before company? Yes, by all means, honeybird; but, when we are alone in this way—Why, you don't mind my old woman here, or the ponies?"

"As you ask my advice," said Miss Lacroix, "I would not say anything to

Lady Juliana of that kind. I fear she will only found on it a claim for satisfaction; she will consider herself aggrieved; and you will have to try and conciliate her, and get her to forgive you."

"Why, what a queer little head you have," said old Sam, much puzzled. "How could that be? No, no. Leave it to me; I'll give her the route to-night."

That day, at dinner, Mr. Pringle said, in his bluntest, roughest way: "Well, my Lady Juliana, I'm afraid we'll have to deny ourselves the pleasure of your society soon."

"I understand you," said she, sharply. "One of your usual complimentary speeches. Pleasure of my society, indeed! But I don't mind you."

"Oh, but that won't do, you know! We're going to fill our house here, and Mrs. P. has asked a lot; and the fact is——"

"You wish to turn me out? What a coarse way you have of speaking, and to a lady who is your guest!"

"Guest, indeed!" sneered Sam.

"Yes, you don't treat me as one exactly. But I decline to accept such a notice to quit as that. You shan't eject me——"

"My dear Lady Juliana," faltered Mrs. Pringle, "we don't mean such a thing. Mr. Pringle puts it so oddly."

"Yes, he does, indeed. But I am not accustomed to it. I have lived in a different class, who do not speak to me in that style. To be insulted, and before your servants! Let me go to my room, please." And to her room the injured lady repaired, declining to see anyone till the next day; when she descended in all her awful terrors to the library, and required all the family to assemble and hear her. It was the first time she had ever been insulted by a gentleman, she declared, so she hardly knew how to behave.

Much abashed, Sam interposed. "Oh, I never meant——"

"I now wish you to understand what our true relations are," said the lady, in a very decided tone. "You talk of having people to come to you. You forget to whom you owe the acquaintance of those people."

Sam was going to say, "Oh! kicking away the ladder—I know," but wisely forebore.

"I look on it, and I must say it plainly, that you are under very weighty obligation to me. Everyone knows it well. I brought you into society, got you friends; you can't deny it—or do you?"

"No, no," said Mrs. Pringle, humbly, "we are much obliged to you."

"You show it," said she, angrily. "Now I mean to take my departure. I cannot expect manners on Mr. Pringle's side, but every lady, whatever she does, counts on a certain respect. But recollect now, please, that this treatment has cancelled everything. I shall make no secret, either, of the way I have been treated. I owe it to myself to give my own account of the way I have been treated by persons for whom I vouched, and pledged my credit."

This alarming threat made the family most uncomfortable. Lady Juliana's tongue, it was well known, was viperish; and the family felt that their guest was but too well acquainted with their weak places; and the picture of the quondam friend and endorser rushing about and blackening them before the face of "society," presented itself with extraordinary vividness. It would be fatal. Accordingly Mrs. Pringle pleaded earnestly and eagerly for Sam; but the lady was sternly inflexible. Then she enjoyed the satisfaction of being ruefully "pressed" to stay, for that delightfully indefinite period "as long as she liked," which she graciously consented to do, on abundant apologies and promises being given of better behaviour in future. Thus was her position actually fortified by what it was intended should destroy it. Above all, she insisted that Mr. Pringle should make the handsomest apologies for his most ungentlemanly treatment. This was done ruefully and reluctantly by Sam, who was overborne by the remonstrances and entreaties of his family, who had thus to accept this "Old Woman of the Sea" for a long period to come.

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